WHY MEN DO NOT GO TO CHURCH

BY

CORTLAND MYERS

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Why Men Do Not Go To Church

BY

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This book is affectionately dedicated
to
one of the best men
who knows how to reach other men
My brother

Rev. Johnston Myers, D. D.,

pastor of the
Immanuel Baptist Church,
of Chicago, Ill.

THE AUTHOR

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION - - - vii

I

THE FAULTS OF THE CHURCH - 13

II

THE FAULTS OF THE MAN - 87

III

THE FAULTS OF SOCIETY - - 119

INTRODUCTION

"Why men do not go to church," is one of the burning questions of the hour. Its fires force their way into the heart of every earnest Christian man. He is compelled to recognize it as a problem which demands his clearest thought, his most consecrated service, and his holiest prayer. The heroic soul is always in peril of having his anxiety and activity called pessimism instead of heroism. It is courageous optimism to face the facts.

If a blind man falls into the ditch, pity him; but if a man wilfully closes his eyes and refuses to see the ditch, he is a criminal. He is not a pessimist who has eyes. He is a pessimist who has lost heart. A wise man holds a lantern at his feet and sees the precipice and yawning chasm.

Facts are not to be ignored, they

are to be studied; and every true man ought to go into training to fight the facts, so that the church may not faint away some day at the sight of the foe. See the giants, but refuse to be called grasshoppers, and with Caleb take the land. Next to omnipotence the largest factor in the solution of the world's problems is the open-eyed Christian hero. Facts are stubborn things, but not victorious, if faced with a look carrying the lightnings in it.

There are many problems which need the mathematics of heaven for their solution, but none more than the absence of men from our churches.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," and "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," have less and less of a hold upon our American life. The man who does not recognize it is simply trying to cover up the weakness and dying state of his own church, and his lack of enthusiasm over the

triumph of Christ. The man who shouts "All's well," in the night of Christ's trial when the church is deserted, is a traitor to his cause, and gives the enemy a better opportunity.

More than one-half of the inhabitants of this country do not attend our churches to-day. If that is a fact, it is appalling, but should be known. Of the non-church goers the vast majority are men. There are millions of men in this country who have no connection whatever with the Christian church. While the churches have been growing in proportion to the population, it is estimated that there are at least ten millions of men not in any church. A few of them attend occasionally; some of them are employed on the Sabbath-day; but most of them are as far from the Christian church as any pagans in the world. This immense army of ten millions is three times as large as was the whole

population of the thirteen States at the Declaration of Independence.

In New York City not more than three per cent. of the male population are members of Protestant churches. The men who are nominally communicants in the Catholic church rarely ever attend its services.

Of the membership of the church nearly three-fourths are women. Of the attendants in most places of worship nine-tenths are women. In one great church I counted two hundred women and ten men. The statement has remained unchallenged that not ten churches in the State of Massachusetts could count ten men added in the last three years from the non-church going population. This is not only true of the cities, but statistics reveal the startling truth, that even in the rural districts more than one-half of the population are absolute strangers to the churches, and live in heathen-

ism in the center of civilization and Christianity.

This separation from the church is not only on the part of the so-called lower class and foreign population, but the rich are among the most guilty. There are the churchless and Christless rich. The social gathering and club-rooms are crowded on Sunday, and the once filled churches are empty. We have written much concerning the "neglected poor;" there is greater demand for emphasis upon the needs of the "neglected rich."

There is no necessity of multiplying figures, the facts are known and recognized everywhere. In most places there is not room in our churches for one-half of the population, if they wanted to go. This room is not more than one-half taken; that which is taken is largely occupied by the women. Where are the men? This has not always been the condition.

What are the forces in modern life which are the producers of this evil? If we discover the cause of the illness, we are more liable to furnish a cure. If a man has heart-disease, cutting his finger-nails will not save him. Let us be bold in our diagnosis, and patient and skilful and hopeful with the remedy; by all means save the men.

Whatever has been said or written upon this problem has been usually a fragment of the truth, a segment of the whole circle. This discussion ought to include within its circumference the "faults of the church," the "faults of the man," and the "faults of society."

WHY MEN DO NOT GO TO CHURCH

I

FAULTS OF THE CHURCH

"ABREAST of the age," should be our watchword. The Gospel of the first century in a church of the twentieth century is the victorious combination. "Out of date" methods and medieval churches are a failure and a farce in this new world and rushing time. The robes and rags of superstition have no attractive force in these days of light and life.

In almost every decade there is a revolution in the methods and movements of the world, and the church which has attractive power in that kind of a world must change with it. Men demand a church adapted to the

dawning hours of a new century, and they have a right to that demand; and the church is traitor to its trust which does not meet it.

The vast majority of men can not be driven to church; they can only be attracted. They will not go because it is their duty to go, or because the Bible tells them to go. They must have the centrifugal force of the church to counteract the centripetal force of their hearts and their world. The church should be a magnet to disturb the sleeping particles of manhood on Sunday, and draw them to the place of worship.

The building of the eighteenth century with an undertaker's sign upon it, and with the appearance of a sepulcher, and a ghostly preacher in the pulpit, and open only once in seven days, will always be repulsive to men, and filled with the irreligiousness of religion.

With every generation new conditions present themselves to the church. Society, business, politics, home, and everything has undergone a marked change within the last quarter of a century. The church has lost her grip upon these times if she does not move with them, and the men of this generation pass by without ever a thought of crossing its threshold. The changed conditions of human life have been called the church's "sealed orders," to be opened, read, and obeyed when they occur. We must change our thought and work and machinery, and even the course of the ship, if we are to fulfil our mission.

The old truth is sacred; old methods may not be. Truth can not be changed; methods must always be changing. Aggressive inventiveness is the greatest factor in success from the human side. He who is wide awake, and lives in his own time, and pushes to

the front, and devises new methods, will be the center of gravity among the men of the world. He who runs in old ruts, and preaches old sermons, and works with old plans, is dead as far as the world is concerned. He has neither life nor power, and that is death. He who studies the right way of presenting truth, and the art of putting things, and the skill in catching men, and understands the importance of tact and sanctified common sense, is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

If the old methods are worn out and ineffective, it is folly and sin to continue their operation. The emperor of Russia, while showing a distinguished visitor over his palace, was asked by the latter why a sentinel was placed on a small grass plot in the

grounds. The emperor called his aide-de-camp and asked for information. This the latter was unable to give. The officer for the day was sent for, but he, too, was unable to enlighten the czar. "Send me the general in command of the forces here," said the emperor. The general came, but could give no further information than that his orders were to post an armed sentinel on that spot. "Investigate it, then," said the czar shortly, "and report the result to me." A long search in the military order-book revealed the fact that, eighty years ago, Catherine II., looking from a window in her apartment, had seen the first spring flower shoot up above the snow. She ordered a sentinel to be placed there in order to prevent any one from breaking the snowdrop. No one thought to countermand the order afterward, and so for eighty years a sentinel had kept watch on that very

spot; a human monument of blind, useless obedience to old orders and customs. Many a preacher stands within the courts of the church a sentinel over some withered flower of the past.

That same czar, while going through his palace one day, noticed some repairs were being made, and, wishing to make inquiry, he beckoned to a workman near by, who immediately dropped his tools and approached the emperor. Before the latter could speak to him a rifle shot rang out, and the man fell dead. A hidden sentinel had not seen the emperor beckon, and, in accordance with orders to shoot any one coming unsummoned within twenty paces of the czar, he had killed the workman, whom he had suspected of approaching the emperor for the purpose of murdering him.

The man who is doing some new work in the kingdom of God, and

reaching the churchless and Christless men, is beckoned to the side of his Master to receive commendation, while the impulsive and shortsighted guard over antiquities tries to shoot him down.

Galileo goes to a dungeon, but the world still moves. They place shackles upon a Columbus, but "Old Glory" floats above the best part of the world. They send the greatest man in China up the Yellow river, but Western civilization moves on toward that ancient empire against all opposition.

The church for the times must meet the needs of the times. It must be of the Columbus spirit, and, with consecrated determination, discover the new world. It will find the discord in the music of modern life, and bring it back to key-note and harmony. It will brave any storm, and sail any sea to reach the great continent of man's

needs, and to satisfy the longings in his heart.

We have a Gospel, but we must study the intelligent application of that Gospel. The truth may be the same, and the need may be the same, but the method must change with the time. The change in the church building ought to correspond with the changes in architecture. The idea of adaptiveness is always foremost in other buildings. A manufacturing building is made for manufacturing purposes. A store is arranged for its special trade. But the church has not always considered usefulness, or even attractiveness. Vast sums of money are used, but there is no light, no room, no ventilation, no brightness, no comfort; but a splendid echo and an everlasting shiver and sepulchral appearance. There are pillars and arches and shadows, but little religion and no people. There is an abundance

of light and air and cheer and comfort in God's provisions, but not appropriated because of ecclesiastical blindness.

An agonizing Methodist preacher cried out at a camp-meeting, "There are souls being lost this very minute for want of more straw at the altar for the people to kneel on." There are men who are kept away from the church and from Christ by our inattention to their comforts and their desires.

The principle which lies at the foundation of every successful business is, "Find out what men want and then give it to them." That same principle must enter largely into the success of the religious as well as the commercial enterprise. In so far as what they want is consistent with principle and propriety, give it to them. If the wants are not right, they should be changed instead of the method. Christ came sometimes where he was not

wanted. Great care is essential in discovering real want. One church says, "A musical entertainment is the want," and they have failed in permanently reaching men. One preacher declares, "A ten-minute sermon is the want," and he signally fails. Man needs the right kind of a want, and the church needs the vision to discover it, and the genius and grace to satisfy it.

We have also to deal with the composite man, and not with the individual. The difficulties are increased by this factor. There must be furnished attractive force for all kinds of men, and not for the personal characteristics of one man. If the church makes its plans to meet the wants of the educated and the rich, and neglects the wants of the clerk and the mechanic, it is far from the ideal in the heart of the great head of the church. The deeper wants of all alike must be

probed to their depths, and then studied and satisfied. There is something in every man which causes him to be attracted to the place where the deeper wants are met.

He is drawn to the church which in a business way adopts business principles for the accomplishment of its purpose.

The financial element in the church-life is often disgusting to the man outside of the church. Many churches fail conspicuously in conducting their own finances. The churches are relatively few in which the subscriptions of members and other matters of business are looked after in a business-like manner. Some churches have paid their indebtedness thrice over in interest, when they were at any moment financially able to cancel it. Property has not been insured, and this carelessness and indifference, seen nowhere else in the world, are pub-

lished everywhere concerning the church, and men have mocked it, and have felt it as a repulsive force. If this is a mere fraction in the problem, it is vital in its solution. The church must be conducted according to the righteous business principles of the world, if the men of the world are to seek its doors and its help. The methods which will bankrupt any store will have no mercy on the church.

The commercial world has been completely revolutionized within a few years, but the church continues at the old stand, in the old way, and loses ground every year. The undertaker's sign still hangs upon it, and it looks like a vault for dead men, instead of a place to find life more abundant.

The men of this age must have a church of this age, or they will pass by it. Do not condemn the man who lives up with the time, or ahead of it,

in the work of the church. He is its savior, and the men will be in his church, and he will not be mumbling words to a wood-yard. Many of the methods of the church are not the methods of the age, and men are looking at it as they do at any other "article of antiquity."

Make the church attractive at any cost to ritualism or ceremony. Blot out Daudet's slur upon the church, "As dreary as a Protestant temple open once a week." Appropriate the inscription upon a Jewish synagogue in upper New York, which belongs only to the body of Christ, "Congregation Gates of Hope." Wise methods are necessary, even if you have a Gospel. Better to bang a drum before men than a pulpit before empty pews.

There was electricity everywhere, but Edison is a nineteenth century man to harness it. The force needs the right channel.

Sunday finds the men of this day with Saturday still on them. They should be given Sunday things but in a Saturday way. They must be found where they live, and led to the church. The ideal service or sermon is the one which begins where men live and leads them to Christ. There is a great chasm between Saturday and Sunday, and, alas! too often between the Sunday-morning newspapers and the church. This must be bridged by the successful preacher and the attractive service. A mere buttress of granite theology on his side of the chasm will not bring the people to his feet. They are not angels, and can not fly; nor are they saints and have the heroism to swim. They are simply men of the world and in the world, and wait for the ropes and rods and spans of helpfulness, and sympathy, and salvation to reach their side.

Man is not disposed to be driven.

There is something of the animal spirit in him. But he can be led. He is so deafened by the world's machinery that he can not hear afar off. The sermon must begin where he is, and lead him unconsciously to Christ.

Before this spirit in church and minister, rhetoric and science and philosophy, and even the familiar statement of theology, must give way. Men are after preachers and churches of this day with blood-earnest spirit. If the man in the pulpit unrolls his morocco case of sentences with one hand, and swings a palm-leaf fan in the other, every manly man passes that church and mocks him. His struggle after rhetoric is easily detected, and especially repulsive to men. It is more apt to please the delicate taste and refinement of women. There is value in rhetoric and polished sentence, if it is adapted to the truth and

the hearer, and is on fire with a holy enthusiasm.

Men are drawn by earnestness and honesty and frankness, more than by the beauty and fragrance of flowers. Some men would rather pronounce every word right before empty pews, than one word wrong before a crowded house. They would rather die with their tinkling-cymbal essay in front of them, than to have men saved without it.

A certain speaker who was remarkably fastidious about his form of speech and pronunciation, was standing on the wharf, when he slipped and fell into the water with a resounding splash. There were a number of people about, and among them an old lady, who shrieked as the gentleman disappeared, "He'll be drown-ded, he'll be drown-ded." Just then the water parted, and the head of the victim of the accident appeared above the

surface, coughing and sputtering. He looked toward the agitated old lady and shouted, "Drowned, not drownded; drowned." His thought was not life, but pronunciation.

It is reported that a stranger said to a seven year old boy in Boston, "Where is Boylston Street?" And the youthful Athenian replied, "While your mode of address, sir, seems to me to savor of undue, not to say unwarrantable familiarity, you shall have the information you seek. You will, perchance, descry, some distance up the street, an imposing structure of commingled renaissance and Venetian architecture. The street for which you inquire is immediately contiguous." Some preachers describe the way to Calvary with just as much vocabulary, and just as little sense as that. But the men in the pulpit who have crowded the pews with the men of the world, have always spoken

in their language, and with a holy desire to help them.

A Spurgeon has always been vehement, plain speaking, and even humorous. He encouraged the despondent by saying, "Face it again like a man! Never say die." He compared some Christians to "isolated icebergs," whom no body goes near, and who float about in a sea of forgetfulness, and added that "we shall be glad to meet them in heaven, but we are precious glad to get rid of them on earth."

Every man in the history of the world, who has reached men, has adapted himself and his sermons to them and their needs. A minister preached before James I. of England, who was James VI. of Scotland. What subject did he take? The king was noted all over the world for being unsettled and wavering in his ideas. What did the minister preach about

to this man, who was James I. of England, and James VI. of Scotland? He took for his text James i and 6: "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed." This application of subject and language to the hearer has always been the characteristic of the victorious preacher. He has never been controlled by policy; he has always bowed beneath the scepter of principle. Men can never be found in any church in great numbers, where the preacher is not governed by a holy boldness in his utterance of truth. If the man in the pulpit is shackled by the social customs, or business methods, or miserly spirit, or worldly life of any members of his church, he has lost the last vestige of his drawing power. Men will only come to hear the unvarnished truth, red hot from a courageous heart. Some of these ten millions of men are outside of the

church, because the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is not fearlessly spoken. A man's tendency is to mock at policy, but always to admire principle.

Thomas Carlyle looked at the church and the preacher and said, "This speaking man has, indeed, in these times, wandered terribly from the point; has, alas! as it were, totally lost sight of the point; yet, at bottom, whom have we to compare with him? A man even professing, and never so languidly making still some endeavor, to save the souls of men. Contrast him with a man professing to do little but shoot the partridges of men. I wish he could find the point again, this speaking one; and stick to it with tenacity, with deadly energy; for there is need of him yet. Could he but find the point again, take the old spectacles off his nose, and looking up, discover almost in contact with

him, what the real Satanas and soul-devouring, world-devouring devil now is. Original sin and such-like are bad enough, I doubt not; but distilled gin, dark ignorance, stupidity, dark corn-law, bastile and company, what are they?

"Will he discover our new real Satan whom he is to fight, or go on droning through his old nose spectacles about old, extinct satans, and never see the real one till he feels him at his own throat and ours?"

One of the characteristics of this age is its extreme practical tendency. Everything must have a definite object, and every force must concentrate in its accomplishment. That which does not assume this practical attitude is discounted and passed unnoticed by men. Every truth uttered must have its practical bearing and a vital relation to the present hour. Mere theories and theologies have lost their drawing

power. The demand for enthusiasm and earnestness is wedded in a holy matrimony to the demand for a practical object and definite purpose. Every sermon and service and method must be indissolubly related to the supreme mission of the church, which is none other than the mission of the Son of Man, "To seek and to save that which was lost." No secondary element must be permitted to usurp the place of the primary. Education is good; philanthropy is good; culture is good; social improvement is good; the advance of civilization is good; but the church which retains its attractive force in the center of the thousands of lost men must keep at its center the crying and undying need of those men. One cause of the failure to reach them is the modern movement along tangent lines, instead of remaining unmoved in the Divine purpose at the very center where the cross has been

erected, as the pivotal point around which all the church machinery should revolve. In proportion as any church scatters its forces and its interests, it loses its grip upon men who are living in a world of specialists and controlling motives. Consecration must be concentration if we win. The dispositions of men must be taken into account if they are reached. "Like seeks like." Their disposition is to fix a goal, and then, with a fighting and victorious will, remove obstacles, and strain every nerve and sinew to win. Theorizing amounts to very little in these days. It is the practical and the definite which are effective. The beautiful clouds of the morning are tinted with the most delicate coloring, but have no rain in them, and no blessing for a thirsty world. Such are rose theories. The false-dreaming, picture-painting, indefinite, impractical, ambitious preacher is the sounding brass,

before whom men thrust their fingers in their ears.

It is the heart-beat which makes harmonious music. It is the clutch of Christ's purpose upon the church which holds men fast to itself. Men are not blind, nor are they altogether wicked, because they stay outside of the church; but they are after the church's Christ, and turn away whenever they do not find Him. They reach the door, and, with a burning anxiety for satisfaction, they hear the cruel mockery of a mechanical choir, and the feeble strains of a few saints making discord with every note in heaven's music as they sing—

"We are a garden walled around,
Chosen and made, peculiar ground.
A little spot enclosed by grace,
Out of the world's wild wilderness."

They turn away in disgust, with a poetic taste and a religious desire both

insulted. An unholy saintliness and exclusiveness in the center of elegance and ceremony is repulsive. The attractive church is forever the place of helpfulness and salvation. Men are not anxious to carry a bouquet home; they want a basket of food. Hungry souls are never satisfied with the fragrance of pulpit flowers.

A lady died of pneumonia from airing her room too much. "But that was a beautiful death." So said a woman whose fad was ventilation. She believed in carrying it even to the extreme of martyrdom. She was like a physician who had discovered a new method of operating for appendicitis. He was telling of twenty cases that he had treated. "Did they all get well?" asked a by-stander. "No; they all died, but the operation was splendid."

A colored preacher, whose fervid eloquence was highly prized by his

own people, was exhibiting the uniformity of Christian experiences. He said: "We go to the tropics and we find a Christian, and we ask him, where were you born? And he replies: 'I was born in Zion.'" Then, after several intermediate stoppings in the temperate zone, asking the same question, and getting the same reply, he said: "Let us go to the north pole and climb up on it, and, looking down upon the people, we ask, where were you born? With one voice they reply: 'I was born in Zion.'" Thus far all was well. The enthusiasm had become intense, and even the more intelligent portion of the audience could not hold down the prevailing emotion. If the orator had stopped it would have been well, but, intoxicated by his rhetorical success, and forgetful of the purpose of his pulpit, he soared too high and broke one of his wings, and killed his usefulness by shouting:

"Brethren, let us now go to de east pole."

Many a preacher's wings have taken him too high for safety or salvation. Carlyle called the British parliament "a talking shop," and told General Wolseley that some day it might be his duty to lock it up, as Cromwell did. The hand of God has turned the key in the lock of some churches for the same reason. Human speech in the pulpit is one of the divinest gifts. The curse rests upon the man and the place which subverts its original purpose.

A man in London, who had listened to preaching in St. Paul's for twenty years, thanked God that he was still a Christian; and well he might. This indirectness is the direct path to the destruction of life and power. The most effectual way of hindering the progress of the Gospel is Satan's movement along the line of the impractical and indirect.

The world does not want for preaching, but is sorely in need of the right kind. "Words, words, words," without the heartburning purpose to save men, is one of the most impassable barriers before the church door. This wisdom of words has made the cross of Christ of none effect. We are not in need of either brains or money. We are in need of the Gethsemane purpose. To gather a crowd temporarily is not the required success. A crowd may be drawn by a balloon ascension. There have been crowd-compelling, money-gathering Gospel balloons, but the balloon has burst, and the aeronaut has fallen into the ocean of his own ambition, and his fellow-man's disgust. The most serious problem is not how to gather the men in great numbers, but how to keep them and to save them. The common people hear the Gospel gladly. It is new and old at once, and has a never-loosening grasp

upon all men. It is the chief yearning of every heart, and must be satisfied. There is a searching, deep and abiding, after God. Let the church be the field where these diamonds of truth and righteousness are found, and eager men will hasten to enter its sacred enclosure.

The spirit which ought to control the church is the spirit of the ship's captain who, when his son was in the water on one side of the boat, and fifty people on the other, had one life preserver which would, however, bear several. He hesitated whether to throw it to his son, or on the other side where it might save many. He at last threw it where the larger number were struggling, and he jumped off the other side to save his son. They were both lost, but the life preserver saved six. The business of the church is not to save itself. Its expenditure of effort is usually along

that line, and men on the outside understand it. Its business is, by the noblest sacrifice and by all means, to save others.

It was Calvary upon Paul, which made him cry out, "I could wish myself accursed for my brethren and kinsmen's sake." And it was that spirit by which Paul reached and saved men. This divinely ordained mission includes every man and all men, rich and poor, high and low. A mission chapel for the poor and a million-dollar church for a few of the rich is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and is food for the mockery of the world. The successful church and the New Testament church must forever be the cosmopolitan and democratic church. Let the rich and poor meet together, the Lord the maker of them all. Many a great church is only one-quarter filled today, and yet they are found building

mission chapels. Men outside of the church are not deceived. They understand the controlling force behind granite walls, and priestly robes, and altar drapery. Break down the gates which have kept back the masses. Let the sound of Christ's voice be heard in the church and echo through the streets and into the churchless man's soul, "He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor."

An old sailor went into a fashionable church in one of our cities, and the doors of the pews were shut as he came up the aisles, and the church was filled with emptiness, neither men or Gospel being there. He passed up the aisle vainly looking for a seat. He was directed to a back row. He walked out and at the doorway asked the sexton what church it was. "Christ's," responded the sexton. "I guess he isn't here to-night," replied the sailor.

In an account of a church it was said there were a great many plain people. The next week the trustees of that church came out in the paper and said it was not so at all; they were elegant people and highly conditioned people that went there. Wo, wo, to that church which prides itself upon the number of carriages waiting at its door. Such arrogance and inactivity and heathenism will receive an earthquake-shock from the justice of Almighty God.

The men of the world have with a measure of justice shunned some of our churches as the gathering place of the holy hypocrites. Hypocrisy must be banished. Reality will be the only permanent attraction. If we are true to our principles at any cost to our sentiment or our comfort, men will push their way to our side. A church for the rich degenerates into a social club, and speedily dies. A

church for the poor can never be a success, because they need the presence of successful, prosperous, and refined people. The victorious church combines all elements in the spirit of the Christ.

In our great cities, up-town has its church magnificence, and down-town has its church reminiscence. The population in the poor districts has increased by the thousands, while the churches have decreased for the thousands in a greater ratio. A gulf is fixed by traitorism to divinest truth. We have splendid buildings and able ministers and uncounted money, but we fail to reach the men, because we have run away from the place where most of the men live, and run away from the supreme mission of the church to seek and save the lost, and to recognize one of the lost to be just as valuable as the other. We discuss and mourn, but fail to act and remedy.

Man the life-boat; push it out into the wave and storm for Christ's sake and the sake of humanity, and the crowds will gather and cheer you on.

The church is also weak in its power in this present day by allowing scholarly ambition and unholy criticism to destroy some of the foundations of its faith. The worst enemy is the one inside of the castle walls.

Evolution as a substitute for the atonement has wrought untold injury. The atmosphere has been poisoned by this false theology. The press has carried it before the eyes of the men outside of the church, and they have read it and devoured it as a new sensation, but they have failed to digest it, and it has driven them from the church. Many of our best men are away from the church, because their minds have become saturated by this species of infidelity, the most serpent-like and deathly of all its kind. The

preacher who has so far forgotten his mission and the meaning of Calvary's blood, as to take the penknife of his own shallow wisdom, and display it defiantly in front of the Holy Spirit of inspiration, while he cuts the sacred page, has unwittingly cut human hearts, and their blood is upon his hands. False doctrine and human substitution are guilty beyond the power of expression, in causing the present condition in church life, and the absence of men from its services. They want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and that truth fresh as it came from the hand of God, without one stain of human ignorance in the name of wisdom upon it.

There is nothing the pew likes better than a positive theology, with its unvarnished application to the common affairs of life. Nothing they care for less than the stilted icicle sentences

on Biblical criticism. Let question find its way into the popular mind and heart through some other channel than that of the pulpit. The shocks and sorrows and sins of life must be met, and the Biblical critic stands palsied before them. The old Bible, made to illustrate the life of this generation, will always secure its hearers. It will have no rival in the attractions of the modern Sunday. Men will have none of the phraseology of dead dogmas. They want the living declaration of a living Gospel, and such a want can be satisfied by the highest intellectual capacity and the deepest spiritual life and the keenest insight into the feelings and needs of humanity. The Bible is not old. It is as new as the last sunbeam which kissed your cheek. Christ is our contemporary. Give Him His place. Enthrone God's Word. Prodigal church, come back home. Preacher

of Christ, grasp the sword of the Spirit; it reaches hearts, slays passions, condemns sin, saves men. "Thus saith the Lord," is your most victorious cry. A faith which believes the Word of God is your righteous possession. When the prophets held their faith, they overturned whole cities. When the apostles believed, they revolutionized the world. The honeycombs of infidelity have sickened both the church and the world. The Word of God must be established in the hearts of men, if we have any authority over their lives. The cry over new things is only on the surface, and never can drown the deeper tones of the human heart. They were surprised when Aladdin went around crying, "New lamps for old ones." They were glad enough to make the exchange. The new lamps were bright and clean. They thought the young man was a fool, of course, and they

were willing to profit by his folly. But he knew what he was about, and in due time he secured what he sought; that old magic lamp to which a mighty spirit was bound, that when the lamp was rubbed he had to come at once and give the owner whatever he asked. The legend illustrates the great truth, that many things are valuable because they are old.

A man stopped at a book-stall one day, and in looking over the second-hand books there, found a copy of the first edition of Milton's "Paradise Lost." He bought it for a shilling, but he would not sell it for many, many pounds, because he possessed one of the oldest and most prized copies. The new teaching flickers in its first moments of brightness, and then God snuffs it out. The old lamp of Divine truth has its flame kept burning by the resources of Heaven. It is the magic lamp which

has in it a mighty spirit, and forever gives the world that for which it seeks most eagerly. The popular and enduring preacher has always been the one who held the Bible first against his own heart, and then pushed it lovingly out toward the hearts of other men. He has preached a Gospel which was not remelted and molded into the forms of human creed or policy by rationalistic interpretation. The great world is still after the fanatic who opens the Bible and reads, "In the beginning God," and closes the Bible as he reads, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

What the average man wants is a knowledge of the Scriptures, and what they teach concerning Christ and His great salvation. Higher or "lower" criticism (mostly "lower") have no satisfaction for his hungering and thirsting soul. Milton said truly, "The hungry sheep look up and are

not fed." What the inspired Word of God has to say concerning them and their life here, and their hopes hereafter, is of tremendous interest to them. Doubt in the pulpit is always out of place. He who twists the exclamation of the Gospel into a question-mark is a failure. The world has doubts enough of its own. It does not care to breathe that kind of poisoned air from the church. It is faith and confidence and reality and truth which fasten themselves like mighty cords upon the hearts and lives of men. We have weakened our power by our interrogations and our parentheses of skepticism.

The effective force in any church, or in any man, is not his doubts, but his positive convictions. When certainties constitute his message, he must be heard, and he will be heard. The child can detect insincerity, and a man can not only detect it, but will take

the wings of his own conviction and fly away from it. When the pulpit has been shaken in its confidence, and no longer rests on the eternal verities, and the critic's essay lies on the desk, and the Bible back on the stand, the world looks on and says:

"The river Rhine, it is well known,
Doth wash your city of Cologne;
But tell me, nymphs, what power divine
Shall henceforth wash the river Rhine?"

Who will wash the critic? If the word blood has dropped out of his vocabulary, how can he say, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth you from all sin."

Men are not anxious to find a church where the word sin is not heard; where "hell" is translated into something softer and sweeter; where the atonement is not considered a necessity; where the Sermon on the Mount, and the Ten Commandments,

and the Golden Rule are watered and weakened. The new world still wants the old Gospel. They may not want it in the old way, and in that, perhaps, lies the pulpit's grave defect. The ark of God was, and can now be, carried upon a new cart. The demand is for the Bible, not changed, but adapted.

The most marvelous part of the American continent is the Yellowstone Park. It is a continuous miracle, a wonder of wonders, the amazement and rapture and inspiration of every traveler. Its scenery is captivating, and takes every man a prisoner. Let the pen of poet and the brush of artist do their best, and its grandeur and sublimity will not be compassed in their work. The Morans and Bierstadts can paint enchanting pictures, but the canvas is incomplete. Its beauty and splendor must be seen to be known. You can describe some

things, but you can not describe the throbbing, sobbing, groaning paroxysm of the Yellowstone geysers. The matrimonial quarrelsome alliance of fire and water, and vapor and gas into a gallery of finest art, can not be told. The human eye must look down into the tinted and jeweled bosom of the morning-glory spring to know what the hand of Omnipotence can do. But the climax of sublimity and majesty, and grandeur and beauty, is crowded into one of the jeweled caskets of Heaven let down upon earth—the "Grand Cañon." Here is art by angelic hand and masonry by the skilful trowel of Heaven. All the colors of earth fade before that coloring. It is a very avalanche of color—the mingling of sunrise and sunset, and rainbow and garden of earth, and all aglow with something heavenly. Here are thrones and temples, and castles and fortifications of thousands of years

standing, and ever touched with new beauty in form and color. You can talk about the walls of Heaven to a man after he has seen the sapphire and topaz, and jasper and amethyst, and twelve gates of pearl in the Grand Cañon. This is the queen of all nature. The exquisite beauty of its sides are her robes. The river is like a narrow green ribbon, fastened as binding to her skirts. The Yellowstone falls, with 350 feet of plunge, is the music of her voice. The giant cliffs and emerald trees are her attendants. The eagles of victory are perched upon her banners, and the whole world bows beneath the swing of her scepter. The characteristic of this part of our continent, and the world, is that it is unique, and stands alone in the larger part of its wonder and its beauty. You never saw some things until you saw them in Yellowstone Park. You never even saw red or purple, or orange,

until you saw them there. Thus it is with the Bible in the world's literature and morality, and religion and life. You never saw some things until you saw them there. It stands unique and alone. There are other systems of morality, but this is the "Grand Cañon." There are other monumental pieces of literature, but not to be compared with this. There are fragments of truth, but here is the combination of all truth. Man never saw morality till he saw it here. He never saw the fatherhood of God, till he saw it here. He never saw the brotherhood of man, till he saw it here. He never saw the incarnation, till he saw it here. He never saw the resurrection, till he saw it here. He never saw the atonement, till he saw it here. He never saw redemption, till he saw it here. He never saw the defeat of all sin, and the triumph of righteousness, till he saw it here. Here is the world's

hope. Before it men will forever stand amazed, enraptured, and inspired. It must be recognized, and kept as the magnet of drawing power; but Christian truth must find its illustration in Christian living.

A Chinese preacher who received twenty-two dollars a month, refused the position of consul at fifty dollars, in order that he might remain and preach the Gospel to his countrymen, who said of him, "There is no difference between him and the Book." That is a tribute which the church of to-day needs for its support. It ranks with that splendid characterization of the noble Judson, "There goes Jesus Christ's man." Churches will be crowded with men when there is no difference between Christians and the Book.

Christ said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." He is best lifted up before the eyes of

men in the lives of his people. We have been making an unwarrantable distinction between the secular and the sacred; an unjustifiable separation between Saturday and Sunday. There is no great chasm, it is a mere tick of the clock. There is no suggestion that Christ ever made any distinction between a Christian's religious and secular life; but He affirmed and reiterated, that the Christian should do everything before the eyes of men with the religious spirit. Christ thrust His men into the every-day world. His incarnation was the secularization of divinity, but he was never anything else than the Christ. A large part of the influence of the church depends upon the manifestation of this life-giving power in the membership of the church. Every man has an inborn admiration for character, which has an unequaled drawing force. Let the church stand

before the world as an embodiment of character, and it will not only receive worldly admiration, but it will command the attendance and the support of men. An unquestioned weakness exists in the poor representation of the principles of Christianity. Men are saying of everything in this day, "What can it do? Not what is your theory, but what can it do?" That same question is bombarding the church and, alas! alas! breaking down some of its old walls. Many of the leading business as well as professional men of our country are church communicants. A large number of them have separated their own business from the Lord's business by an earthly divorce law, and do not carry their religion into their occupation, and reveal the Christian spirit in every-day life. One of the most pressing needs in the church is seven-day Christianity. Speech is easy, even

profession is not difficult; but character is costly, and it is that which is most valuable to the church in reaching the men. The eyes of the world are looking for a difference between the man in the church and the man outside of it. They have a right to find it. The church ought to demand its visible existence. It is a glittering fallacy, but nevertheless a black-hearted one, which declares that we must bring the church into the world and the world into the church in order to reach the unchurched. We have already gone too far in that direction, and have lost power every step of that crooked path. "Come ye out, and be ye separate," has never been taken away from the list of divine commands. A separated church and not a worldly church will accomplish God's desire. Weakness can never become power. Strength of character will alone be the requisite force. We

need more church discipline, and not less of it. It is the reasoning of insanity to suppose that men will be drawn to a church which nominally stands for righteousness and yet permits sin and worldliness to control its life. The church must take some men out of its membership, if it would put other men into its pews. It is the men of the church who represent the church to the men of the world. The need is not so much a costly structure, or an elaborate service, as it is the Christ-like character. The religious life of the church member must be deep enough to spread itself over the seven days of the week, as well as the hour of church service on Sunday. With all the faults of this age, it admires reality and hates "cant" and hypocrisy. It does not ask the church to cut the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, and the golden rule out of its Bible, but it

demands that the church representative shall reveal them in his life. The man outside turns away from the Pharisee who prays with a loud voice, "I am better than my fellowman," and then breaks every law in the divine catalogue. The life must correspond better with the creed. The fault lies not so much in the doctrine, or the sermon, or the service, as it does in the life.

"And so the Word hath breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds,
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than are poetic thought.

"Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the home or digs the grave,
Or those wild eyes that watch the wave,
In roarings round the coral reef."

The wires of Christian character must be stretched between the church and the world, if men are to recognize

its power and rejoice in its life. This contact is positively essential.

The poor and the rich alike can be drawn toward the church by the greatest power in the world—the human touch.

"There where, in London, the Holborn is flung over another street in the neighborhood of St. Paul's Cathedral, the viaduct is supported on lofty arches, and at night are gathered there, in those roomy, dry recesses, the riffraff of that part of the great metropolis—thieves, those flying from justice, and even homeless little boys.

"When the great clock of St. Paul's has boomed the stroke of midnight, and the arches are filled with these poor people, there approaches a tall, thin gentleman, with a lantern and one or two assistants, who go from arch to arch and group to group; and while many flee, they gather by morning, thirty or forty hungry, ragged

children into a room pleasantly lighted, and there the gentleman feeds and clothes them; and, having fed and clothed them, tells them of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And so he spends his nights, robbing his sleep of its allotted time. His friends remonstrate, but he answers:

"'My heart is breaking with agony for my poor boys.'

"Who is this man? He has in his veins the bluest blood of the British aristocracy; he is the Earl of Shaftesbury, who leaves his palace at the West End to dig amid the filth and squalor of these recesses of Holborn Viaduct, to find the boys whom he can save for Jesus Christ's sake."

And then there were the costermongers. They would not receive help from Lord Shaftesbury; they said he was too proud and his blood was too blue. So the Earl of Shaftesbury brought himself down to them.

He became a costermonger, with cart and donkey, and with his crest emblazoned on the harness. When they saw that they said, "Lord Shaftesbury stands with us; he shall help us." And he did. "And he came and touched the bier."

"When did your reformation begin?" a gentleman asked a Christian man who had formerly been a great criminal.

"With my talk with the earl," (Shaftesbury, noted for his devotion to discharged criminals).

"What did the earl say?"

"It was not so much anything he said, but he took my hand in his and said, 'Jack, you'll be a man yet.' It was the touch of his hand, electrified by his soul of love."

Men are everywhere in sin and despair. Yes, long ago they went away from God. Down into the depths they plunged. Now all is lost.

Purity is gone. Courage is gone. Faith is gone. Hope flickers but feebly. They could be saved if some one would only show them compassion. Stretch out your hand and rescue them by a touch of love!

Organizations and machinery can never take the place of a "Shaftesbury." That personal touch is like the hand of Christ upon the blind eye, and makes it see a new world. We can never afford to neglect this in all our emphasis upon methods and attractions, because it is fundamental in the work of reaching men. Here lies the responsibility and the ability of the layman. He must stand between the church and the world, and must always stand lovingly and courageously for his faith. He will command the respect of his fellows, and they will search for his church.

At a banquet of the Bar Association of Boston, not long ago, the presiding

officer indulged in some cheap flings at the doctrine of Providence. He was followed by a judge of the State of Massachusetts, who spoke in the same strain. He, in turn, was followed by one of the most distinguished justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, who very quietly, very modestly, but very firmly, confessed his faith in the constant and beneficent Providence of God. Said my informant, "The audience was hushed in an instant; and you could have heard a pin drop."

A distinguished United States senator was recently delivering an address at a gathering of the nation's officials, when he gave a most beautiful tribute to the Lord Jesus as his own personal Savior. There was death-stillness and an evident admiration. Every man and every newspaper declared his a magnificent address, and the greatest of the occasion. He was un-

consciously bringing men into the church of his Christ.

When Commodore Philip, on the battleship *Texas*, uncovered his head, as a Christian, in recognition of what God had wrought, he drew every man in this country toward the church doors. What the pulpit professionalism fails to do, this unseen and oftentimes unrecognized force accomplishes. The greatest obligation after all rests upon the man who is already in the church. He has no right to find fault with the preacher's lack of attractive power, as long as his own life is so unattractive.

Distance between the church and the men of to-day is also created by the lack of real living brotherhood in the church life.

Some of the world's organizations can at least, with a degree of justice, point the finger of scorn in the direction of the church organization. They

declare that they love each other better, and help each other more, than the men of the church do. It is unquestionably true that philanthropic and social reform were once the children of the church, while now they have almost entirely become sciences by themselves. They ought to have been kept as a vital part of the church. They were born in her principles and rocked in the cradle of her early and triumphant days. One of the root causes of failure lies in the inability to recognize the importance of our social obligations and our social opportunity. We ought to see the nature and necessity of men, and lay a brotherly hand upon them and their society. By other means we may bring them within the church occasionally, but by this means only can we keep them. The church has no longer the power of a hierarchy, but its social power is now its golden op-

portunity. This is the day of brotherhood, and not of priestly officialism. The church has been too individualistic. It has been dealing with the microscope, and has forgotten the use of the telescope. It needs a larger horizon. It has a social and philanthropic mission.

We have been singing, "In the Sweet By and By." We need a new hymn, with better music: "In the Sinful Here and Now." Christ claimed the kingdoms of this world, even if He did refuse to take them upon Satan's conditions. The minister's education is defective who believes that his vocation is purely spiritual, and that he has no duty to perform in the improvement of the present world. His special business is to save souls; but one of the channels for the accomplishment of this purpose may be in the solution of economical and political problems. If he studies his

Bible one hour, he might profitably take one-half of that hour in its application to the great social issues of the day. He might as well build his church around the north pole, and write his sermon with the point of an icicle, if he does not enter into the wrongs and the sorrows of the poor, and also into the justification of the righteous rich.

The Earl of Shaftesbury said: "I find that evangelical religionists are not those on whom I can rely. The factory question, and every question for what is called 'humanity,' receives as much support from the 'men of the world,' as from men who say they will have nothing to do with it. No stir as yet in behalf of my 'children's employment commission.' I can not discern how, humanly speaking, I have ever made any progress at all. To whom should I have naturally looked for the chief aid? Why, undoubtedly,

to the clergy, and especially those of the trading districts. Quite the reverse; from them I have received no support, or next to none; one or two, in their individual capacity, have given me encouragement, and wished me godspeed, but as a body, or even numerously, tho singly, they have done, are doing, and will do nothing. And this throughout my whole career. There are grand and blessed exceptions; thank God for them! . . .

"I find as usual the clergy are, in many cases, frigid; in some few hostile. So it has ever been with me. At first I could get none, at last I have obtained a few, but how miserable a proportion of the entire class! The ecclesiastics as a mass are, perhaps, as good as they can be under any institution of things where human nature can have full swing; but they are timid, time-serving, and great worshipers of wealth and power. I can

scarcely remember an instance in which a clergyman has been found to maintain the cause of laborers in the face of pewholders."

There are modern Philistines in trusts and monopolies, and in labor organizations, which the chosen people of God must courageously fight, if they keep their own safety and command the respect of the world. There ought also to be a better care exercised toward the membership of the Christian family. "Our church home" is the best name for the church. The family idea, and the home atmosphere, and the fireside interest, and the helpfulness of an undying love, are elements of power. We have had a very kind solicitude, oftentimes, for the well-being of those in darkest Africa, and darkest England, and darkest New York, but have neglected the first responsibility toward those of the "household of faith." Christian ex-

ample must be emphasized, but it has its application to the life of the Christian society, and to the local church as well as to the individual. Much of the inspired teaching bears upon the relation of disciples to each other. The effort was to be the making of an ideal society in each church. That was the dream of the early church, and therein may be found a large part of its wonderful strength. If the "household of faith" was filled with helpfulness, and justice, and love, and brotherly kindness, and consideration, how the world, struggling after better social conditions, would be drawn towards it! A Christian society in the church is the divine method of reaching the world. It is God's leaven which will ultimately transform human society. A church quarrel means empty pews. Coldness in the church life places dying embers on the hearth, and a shivering world surrounds other

firesides to find warmth and love. Christian sympathy and brotherhood is the most powerful heater in the world. It changes the Arctic zone into the tropics. If a church is a floating iceberg, every man shouts to every other man, "Keep out of its way." He may be drowning, but will make his death-struggle to get away from its coldness and its helplessness. Many churches are refrigerators. The church army has gone into winter quarters.

The cold world wants warm words, warm smiles, warm welcomes, warm hearts, warm prayers, and the warm atmosphere of the brotherhood of man in the place where they teach the fatherhood of God. There is another evil related to this one, or rather an expansion of it, in the lack of the brotherly relation, and of cooperation between the various churches. The world is not schooled in doctrinal

distinctions, and can not easily recognize the necessity for church separation, and sometimes church opposition. No period in the world's history has witnessed more significant changes than this age in which we live. The tendency of the time in the political and business world alike is unquestionably toward consolidation and centralization and cooperation. The man who fails to recognize this, fails in his undertaking. The church which fails to adapt itself to this characteristic of the age, must also fail to reach the men of this age. Cooperation must be one of the watchwords of the church in the dawning hour of the twentieth century. Organizations have been multiplied, and even different denominations separated into more divisions, and religious efforts have been scattered and weakened, and fields have been neglected while others have been crowded, and no great and united

effort has been made toward cooperation in spending money and utilizing effort to reach men. Denominations with vital principles should live, and can live, even if we destroy sectarianism and bigotry.

What defeat we would have experienced if our battle-ships in the Pacific, or in the Atlantic, had turned their guns upon each other instead of the enemy. The church has been guilty of this weakness and folly, but is opening its eyes to-day toward the enemy and the necessity of cooperation.

At the charge of Fort Donaldson, in the late war, the enemy's works had been attacked many times by the different companies. At last, wearied of their fruitless efforts, the Union forces for the most part massed themselves at the foot of the hill, and advanced together. They came on in such numbers, and with unbroken lines, that nothing could withstand

their progress. They gained the heights, and, united, won a victory which their divided forces could never have obtained.

Division has driven men away from the church, and wherever it exists today it breeds disgust. People are afraid of a riot, and they will go around an entire block to get out of its way. The church must understand that principle. The necessity is for a growing recognition of the good in all denominations, and that which is fundamental in doctrines and life, and which is common to all. There is a basis in our Christianity upon which we all can work. There is a center around which we all can move. The cross is the important point, and all emphasis can be safely and harmoniously given to that. Our real force in church aggressiveness today is largely denominational rather than Christian. Organizations are

multiplied on some fields, while time and money are wasted, and men are not reached. All denominations should get together as business concerns, and in the spirit of the age map out the work and utilize the force. That may be an ideal of the future, but it should be the goal toward which every conscientious, consecrated, earnest Christian man and church is striving. Men are drawn toward great institutions and great enterprises. We need great centers of life and activity, and at least in village and city alike there should be cooperation and the concentration of effort in the accomplishment of the one supreme purpose. Denominations need not mean less, but Christianity should mean more. Temporary prosperity of the individual church need not mean less, but the reaching and saving of these ten millions of men should mean more.

In our effort to enter into the

spirit of the age, we need a constant reminder of that more important "spirit" of power. We may not need the institutional church as much as the inspirational. "It is by my spirit," saith the Lord. No human agency can ever supplant the function of the Holy Spirit in the work of reaching men. Methods and agencies may touch the man outwardly, but are thwarted in the most important work. They are only auxiliaries. Philanthropy and education and culture may be accomplished by the merely human element, but the higher and better, and eternal and spiritual impulses depend upon the work of the Holy Spirit; and in ignoring this lies the secret of the failure in many, and apparently earnest, active, and attractive churches. It was after the descent of the Holy Spirit in the early church that the five thousand *men*, besides women, came into its life. The present growth of

modern methods in church work, with so much emphasis placed upon their relation to this present life, make more important the deepening of the spiritual life. The extension ought to correspond with the intention. Widening and deepening should be proportionate. If the past preacher and method have been too "other worldly," the pendulum should not be allowed to swing too far. All church machinery must be run by the Spirit of God. This distinction between the church and other organizations should be enlarged rather than obliterated. It is neither knowledge nor machine that the church needs so much, after all, as the holy fire which is power. Education is nothing without inspiration. Christian activities are useless when they are not the outcome of spiritual life. Some of our most enthusiastic enterprises are separated from the root of their life, and they soon wither and

die. Improved methods of agriculture do not remove the necessity for toil; they simply bring larger returns. It does not make any difference whether it is a steam-plow or crooked handles for the calloused and bruised hand of the farmer. The harvests depend upon obedience to the laws of God which grip the world. As the machinery does not dispense with the toil, neither can any church organization dispense with the necessity for the cooperation of the Holy Spirit.

The man of the world does not stay away from the church because it has too much of the Spirit of God, but because it has too little. It is a false impression to suppose that the Holy Ghost is a repulsive force to men of the world. The church which has a sham sanctity, and is too pharisaical to touch the world, may repel men, but what a sad mistake to make the Spirit of God responsible for an ele-

ment of heathenism dressed in the garments of the Gospel. We can neither invent right things, nor undertake great things, unless it is done under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. With His power, let us dare to attempt heroic things for Christ, and the manliness of the world will be with us. The church is dependent upon the Holy Spirit for its courage, and the men of the world are always drawn toward the manifestation of the heroic. It is the revelation of the vitality and reality of the Christian faith. It was the audacity of the faith of Pentecost which reached the men.

Leonardo da Vinci, the great painter, was once employed by the emperor to produce a picture, which was to be finished by a certain date. After working some time at his task, however, the artist absented himself from his studio for a week or more, doing

apparently nothing toward completing the picture. The emperor hearing of this sent a courtier to remonstrate with the painter, and, when the latter did not heed the remonstrance, commanded him to come into the royal presence.

"Why have you neglected the painting of the picture we have ordered, and which it is urgent shall be soon finished?" was the question sternly put to the artist.

"I have not neglected it, sire," was the answer.

"But we know that you have not had brush in hand these eight days," said the wondering emperor.

"True, sire," said the artist, "but nevertheless the picture has grown. The work of the brush is the least to be done in producing a painting. The last week I have been away from my studio, it is true, but wherever I went that picture has been in my mind, and

slowly, steadily, I have been getting in place the figures to be put upon the canvas. The picture, sire, will be done at the stated time."

And it was. And this picture is to-day regarded as the greatest work of the famous painter.

We can not go carelessly into our great work, if we would go victoriously. It was "tarry ye" before "go ye." It is the earthly mission of the Divine Spirit to furnish plans and make them effective by the use of consecrated hearts. Oh! church of Christ, lay thy left hand upon the altar, and thy right hand on the arm of God.

II

THE FAULTS OF THE MAN

ALL men are the sons of the original Adam, and every drop of their blood still carries that early manifested tendency to shackle the blame to somebody or something, other than self. We must be just and look at this other apple, and discover his finger-marks upon it, and the print of his teeth in it, and hear the smack of his lips over imaginary sweetness in neglected duty. He is away from the church because of something within his own heart and life, as much as any reason within the church itself. In his anxiety for excuses, he should not be blind to his own faults. The church must bear its share of the re-

sponsibility, but his shoulders may bend beneath the greater burden.

The church and its claims upon every man are not mere incidentals in human life. They supply an ever present and ever pressing necessity. The reason for neglect of worship is not found in a decrease of religious nature. There is and there can be no less of that element in man. It is an inborn necessity. It is as dependent upon laws as the physical wants of the human organization. It is a vital part of the man, and can not be destroyed, even if neglected. It may be dwarfed, but its demands for recognition and satisfaction can not be silenced. He knows little of his own nature, and has taken very superficial views of his world, who regards religion and worship and the church as something not essential to his best interests and the fulfilment of his most sacred duty. There are men with a certain element

of goodness in them, and a practise of legal morality in their lives, who do not yield assent to dogmas or acknowledge the need of worship. If they are honest in regard to the dogma, they may not be blamed; but in regard to the worship of God, and the relation to his church, they commit a grievous wrong against their highest nature, and have less of the best elements of noble character and manhood than they might have.

The worshiping faculty is in man the same as his other faculties, and is the ultimate and climax of them all. His other faculties have their correlate in the world. The voice has the air. The foot has the solid earth. Hunger has the food. Thirst has the water. So in this highest of all his faculties, he finds its correlate in God, and an undying necessity for its satisfaction.

John Stuart Mill was one of the greatest men, and had one of the

greatest minds of any man in his own age, or in any other age, and yet he did not worship God. His early life and his father's blood and his education had all drawn him away from the church. He tried to kill all faith, and became a mere reasoning machine, yet he was not able to destroy the demand for something to worship. He eulogized his own wife, until he declared that she combined all the qualities of perfection, and he worshiped her. She was his ideal. Those seven and one-half years were the only happy years of his life. When she died the light of his life went out, and he made frequent pilgrimages to her grave in the south of France to worship her memory. There was never a sadder closing in mortal life than in his. In his attempt to destroy a religious nature, the poison made the cup of his life too bitter to drink. There are those who declare that religion

belongs to the childhood of the human family; in its manhood religion has ceased to be a necessity. That is not true. It was a part of the breath of life, which was breathed into the nostrils of the first man. It is elemental in his nature. The God who has provided for the wants of all his creatures, has not disappointed the rational expectation of a provision for this noblest and highest of all needs. The spiritual need finds its wants met in Christianity, and the worship in the Christian church.

"Why men do not attend church," can not find its answer in his lack of religious nature, or its demands upon him.

This problem can not be solved by the shallow and often repeated declaration, that he has lost his respect for the church and the minister. It is constantly affirmed with a variety of manufactured illustrations, that men

do not hesitate to say, "We do not care for the church, but we do care for Christ." As many of the striking illustrations are not true, so this striking statement, whenever made, is not true. It may be an excuse which furnishes temporary relief to a disturbed conscience, but can never be stamped as a reason for the neglect of one of life's duties. Every true man in his best moments of clearest thought, and purest heart, respects the church, and never more than in this present hour; nor is he opposed to the thousands of men in the ministry who are giving consecrated service for the relief of a world's suffering and sorrow, and for the elevation of men and the regeneration of society. With all the faults of the church he recognizes its great work. He knows its faults are upon the surface, and its inner life is still for his good and for the good of his fellow men. He

has not altogether lost respect for nor faith in the church. The church is still Christ's body, and admiration for Him can not be so easily divorced from respect for His body. There may be human marks upon it, but in its essential features even the eyes of the world see something of Him. This loss of respect for the church and the minister is less of a factor in the solution of the problem, than the shallow surface view would have us think. Christ was never more admired by the world than to-day, and His church never commanded more respect than to-day. The man's absence from church is not and can not be always attributed to his condemnation of the church, while he still retains his admiration for Christ.

His fault lies in his misunderstanding of the spirit of the church. He has been educated to believe that the church is a class institution, existing

only for its own kind, and those the select few. With a heart ready to believe it, he has been told that they do not want him. The exception, if there is one, has been made the rule under such false instruction. With this abiding impression he takes it for granted that all churches are cold and indifferent to his interests, and have no warm welcome for him to their services. This is a misrepresentation of blackest color, and he has not even occasionally investigated its truth. It leaves him asleep on Sunday morning, and leaves the church empty, and furnishes a very satisfactory condition of things for a lazy, irreligious man. The fact in the case is that most every church is extremely anxious to have worshipers fill its pews. They are making vast expenditures for no other purpose in the world save this one. Money and effort and time beyond all computation are lavishly given to ur-

gently invite men into the church. The rarest exception in this day is a cold hand at the outside door, and a lock upon the pew door. A man has recently made a most thorough investigation of the welcome given to strangers in our churches. He calloused his hands by the laboring man's toil, and clothed himself in the laboring man's garments, and marked himself as one of the poorest, and then visited the largest and richest churches in our great cities; and after this severe test he writes: "Never once did I fail of a friendly greeting. In the vestibule I always found young men, who acted as ushers, and who were charged with the duty of receiving strangers. With every test I felt increasingly the difficulties of the situation for these young men, and my wonder grew at their graceful tactfulness. A touch of the patronizing in their tone, or any marked effusiveness of cordiality, would have

robbed it as effectually of all virtue. It was the golden mean of a man's friendly recognition of his fellow man, with no regard for difference in social standing, which was the course so successfully followed by these young ushers. In the pews there was no withdrawing of skirts, nor were there other signs of objection to me as a fellow-worshiper. On the contrary, a hymnal, or a prayer-book, would be promptly offered, and sometimes shared; and, at the service end, a cordial invitation to come again would often follow me from the pew door, altho frequently I noticed that I was conspicuously lonely as a representative of the poor."

In some places he attended church in his working-clothes, and caused no comment. "Many times," he says, "I wondered at the gracious cordiality which I met."

The only inference which can be drawn from such an experience as this

is, that the hindrance to church attendance exists in the man, poor or rich, more than in the church itself.

A large part of the cause of non-attendance is in the feeble desire. Many of the excuses are those of men who do not want to attend worship.

The man is also influenced by a misunderstanding of the purposes of the church. Its chief object is unknown or ignored by many of its critics. They have failed to recognize its supreme mission as being the mission of its Founder and its Head, "To seek and to save the lost." Its business is eternal, and, therefore, unlike any of the world's organizations. It stands unique and alone. It is on earth as the Divine channel for the salvation of the immortal soul from sin and condemnation. It is, therefore, unjust and unreasonable to compare it with any of the world's organizations. They have a distinctive and beneficial

mission, but it is a wholly temporal one.

The church is the mightiest factor in human society here and now, but its work has to do first and fundamentally with the needs of the soul. It cares for the body and touches every part of human society, by virtue of the planting of these seeds of eternal life. Its Gospel is deliverance from sin and hell. The man of the world has often misunderstood this important distinction between the church and his lodge or club. He has condemned the church because it did not do just what his organization did, as if they had entered into competition and were supposed to do the same thing, and only that. The church is not a charitable institution, nor an educational institution, nor a mere center of philanthropy and culture, but it is primarily the place of regeneration and conversion, and eternal salvation. It

is the fortification of righteousness in the great battle against sin and wrong. It does the very best for man in this present life, but that is not its controlling motive. The spirit of the Gospel is, "Peace on earth, good-will to men." And it has in it the improvement of human society and the making of life more desirable, but that is incidental. It remains true that the purpose of Christ and His coming into the world was to prepare men for the world to come. We confidently assert that the main object of Jesus Christ before the Jewish sanhedrim, and upon the Roman cross, and in His commission of "go ye," was to save individuals from future torment. The crucifixion of the Son of God would never have taken place for purely temporal benefit. It is a mockery of His sacrifice, and a sad perversion of truth, to teach that the church ought to have most to do with this life, and the pass-

ing necessities of the individual and his society. The emphasis upon the present at the expense of the future, and the emphasis upon the body instead of the soul, have wrought untold injury, and rooted a poisonous misunderstanding in the minds and hearts of men. The church has a social mission, but it has first a saving mission. It is the only power which can save society, but that work can only be accomplished according to the eternal principles of the Gospel.

We need the practical teaching of the highest morality found in the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount, and the Golden Rule; but these very teachings, with all their sublimity and power, are dependent upon truths which some are now casting in the shadow, and yet are so important and so vital to the Gospel and its power, that without them the kingdom of God is an impossibility.

We have heard too much in these last days concerning the meat and drink of the kingdom of God. At the very heart of the kingdom, and of every interest to human society, lie the regeneration, and repentance, and faith of Christianity. The first requisite is found in the individual man. Society can not be born again. "Ye must be born again," if society is regenerated. The church must forever save the man first, and not touch the surface needs of the society in which he lives. Keep first things first. The lodge has its place, and a place of benefit in society, but woe be to the man who allows it to usurp the place of the church, or compares the one with the other. They are not upon the same level, because they have not the same purpose and never can have. The open Bible on the altar of a lodge room can never take the place of the pulpit, which stands in the shadow of

the cross, and from which is constantly heard, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Christ came to teach men how to live in relation with each other, but He came first to teach them how to live in right relation with God. The kingdom of God comes here and now, just in proportion as that elemental truth is understood and propagated. Any competition with anything else in the world is sin. The church stands alone or can not stand at all. Its very life and victory depend upon its holding that distinct position in the world. It is the voice of the unreasonable as well as the unrighteous which says, "the lodge is my church." The church does and will do the most for human society, but will do it only through the eternal redemption of the individual. The soul must first be stamped with the word "blood," before real

and abiding benefit will accrue to society.

The man outside of the church has also a misunderstanding of society itself. He has become cynical and soured by the introduction of wrong principles into his heart and life. False statements have been made, and he has readily and almost greedily believed them without investigating their truth. His ideas concerning riches and poverty, concerning monopolies and modern business transactions, have had much to do with the destruction of his own happiness and ambition. Some men have become despondent, and others have become careless, and others have been angered, and others made indifferent by these false impressions. The real conditions oftentimes have been far from that which they supposed them to be. The church has been sadly affected by this element of social grievance and misun-

derstanding, and frequent misrepresentation.

Every rich man ought not to be cursed, and every poor man ought not to be blamed; but there should be righteous discrimination and absolute justice. When the rich man has been condemned, whether justly or unjustly, the church which he attends is condemned with him. But the man who does not attend church, and gives that as his reason, may misunderstand both society and the church. The church may not have the relation to society which he supposes it holds. It is not, and can not be, held responsible for any or all of the wrongs in society, even if they are there just as he represents them to be. The church did not create them, nor does it uphold them, even tho it may not do all of its duty in destroying them. The Gospel furnishes the only adequate principles for the perfection of human

society, but it has no power to enforce them apart from the wills of individual men. It can not enter into labor disputes or business methods by any other means than the propagation of the three great laws which govern the Christian society: the law of service, and the law of sacrifice, and the law of love. A man's ideas of the actual society may be wrong, and his ideas of the ideal society may be wrong, and his demand upon the preacher and the church to propagate them is unquestionably wrong. The rich man wants labor organizations condemned, and the poor man wants trusts and great combinations of capital condemned, while there may not be much reason or religion in either desire. It is not easy to formulate particular sins of either labor or capital, and then justly condemn them. It is not easy to say why a combination of manufacturers, or a combination of workingmen, is essen-

tially wrong. It may be a factor for the higher life and enlarged privileges and wider distribution of products to the common people. Its size may not be its sin. If there are fraudulent operations they ought to be condemned in the individual or the combination; but many a man is blind to this distinction, and he passes by the church and neglects to worship, all because his own theories, whether true or false, and whether they are a part of the legitimate business of the church or not, are not proclaimed fearlessly by every preacher of the Gospel.

The present misunderstanding of society, and the relation of the church to it, is a large element in the discussion of this important question of church attendance; and here the man is more at fault than the church.

Back of this element to rightly interpret the relation of the church to society lies the man's failure to under-

stand himself. He rarely gives personal duty and individual responsibility their proper place in his world. His criticisms have become a cataract drawn across his vision, and hinder that important view of the man alone, standing before the eternal throne and receiving penalty for the sin of omission. He raises himself upon the stilts of righteous pride for the fact of not having violated openly some of the commandments. But he has neglected the deeper laws of his life, and may rest under greater condemnation. If a member of the church is untrue to his sacred profession, that can not relieve the man outside of the church of his own divinely established obligation. The man who does not look at himself first must lose all the perspective in his view. Some persons by a cultured or a constitutional imperfection are always failing to see the important things and their relation to

themselves and to each other. They create petty criticisms and become a pestering element in the world. A sense of perspective is one of the supreme requisites for a right vision and right living. There is no substitute for it. Blindness sometimes is preferable to its absence. Every human being must see himself first before he can see his fellow man or his world. His own duty must stand in the foreground and forever occupy the best place. He has always been at fault in wilfully ignoring his own personal duty to God, to his fellow man, to society, and the church. He is also blind to his own best interest. Every man serves himself best who serves God best; and he serves God best who renders him the worship of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. It is a mistake even from a selfish standpoint to stay away from the church on the Sabbath-day. In it alone is found the

best recreation and the noblest inspiration and the highest joy. Every law in the universe operates toward that end. He is his own enemy who sleeps or plays during the church hour. The law of gravity has no more power in his life than the law which declares, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God." The welfare of his whole spiritual, intellectual, and physical being depends upon it. The non-church-goer makes here his most fatal mistake. There has been no provision made to occupy its place. It is life's greatest need. Anything which he allows to prevent his church attendance is the destroyer of that which is most vital to his own welfare here and hereafter.

After Rossini had rendered "William Tell" the five hundredth time a company of musicians came under his window in Paris and serenaded him. They put upon his brow a golden

crown of laurel leaves, but amid all the applause and enthusiasm Rossini said, "I would give all this brilliant scene for a few days of youth and love."

Some old man whom the world has never crowned, but who has passed the Sundays of seventy years in the house of God, knows more of true life and has drunk oftener from the sparkling waters of joy and satisfaction. His face is wreathed in smiles and he cares little for the world's laurels, as he sings:

"The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields
Or walk the golden streets."

Every man has an inborn desire after God. To ignore it or to smother it is fatal. This was recognized as fundamental in the law of Sinai, and also in the higher Gospel of Calvary.

The desire for God and the things of God is in the center of a man's own soul. He who stifles that cry is a self-murderer. If the man without a church would honestly and conscientiously diagnose his own case, he would discover this longing in his own blood and own atmosphere and own world, and would immediately seek the house of God to secure its satisfaction. Criticisms of the church and its membership would cease, and in all truth he would be compelled to declare, "I am most to blame, and I will make the church better for my own sake and the sake of my fellow men." It is not infidelity which keeps men out of the church. It is blindness to the highest good and an indifference which is born and nurtured in that darkness. The non-church-going man does not wake up on Sunday morning; he sleeps, he forgets, he misunderstands, he lazily

dreams of rest. God speaks, he does not hear and his loss is beyond all comprehension. That sleep is the sleep of death.

There is also an elemental fault upon his part, in the standards which he has adopted for judging the church. He passes judgment upon the church because of what an individual in the church may say or do. If one man is bad and ninety-nine others are good, the one man represents the church for him, and he turns his back upon it. This is the common, but radically false, method.

What is the purpose of the church, and the work of the church, and the large majority of the church membership, and the head and only example in the church? These are the just standards. Man outside of the church, what think you of the Christ, and the power and influence of this body of His in the world? What have

you against Christ? Speak it out boldly.

You might find worm-eaten leaves in the garden of Fontainebleau, and the sting of an insect in the beauty and fragrance of the Champs Elysees. The old orchard had one specimen of natural fruit growing against the back fence; but scores of other trees were loaded with luscious fruit. I have forgotten the taste of that sample of sourness, but as long as memory lasts I shall still feed upon the delicious apples of the old home orchard. You would not tear down or trample upon the whole garden because one rose leaf had received the gnawing of the summer destroyer. There are members of the church who ought not to be; but there are hundreds and thousands, the best of the world, living triumphant Christian lives. Their religion does not consist wholly of hymn-singing and church-going,

but every-day consecrated Christ-like living.

If you wish to know real art, study the great masters. If you wish to find the value of real Christians, study the masters of sacrifice and devotion, and righteous life.

Within the sweep of this great circumference of the man's fault lies his misunderstanding of the claims of Christ, and the claims of the church to allegiance and support. He boasts of his morality and imaginary power to live without the church, unmindful of the important factor which the church has been in his life. All his boasted morality and culture and manhood are but the reflected light of the church. The moon with equal reason might call the world's attention to her silvery garments and the glory which she sheds at midnight upon the darkened earth. Her light is simply the reflection of the sun's light, a cold,

dark sphere, receiving all its brightness from the center of light and heat. It is hollow conceit for any man to stand outside of the church and say, "Behold my righteousness; I am even holier than thou, and have as great enthusiasm for humanity and interest in philanthropy and education." Oh! swollen pride, self-inflicted blindness, thou art cold and dark and dead. All thy light is reflected from the Sun of Righteousness. It is the shining of the face of Jesus Christ, and the influence and power of His church in your life, and your world. All these centuries of its existence, the church and its sacrifice, and service and salvation, have wrought out this glorious possibility for your life. Your boasts would rest as a naked falsehood upon the lips of a cannibal, or some one with the last vestige of humanity disappearing, if it were not for the Christianity of the church. The church which has

preserved this Gospel has made man's civilization what it is, and his salvation what it may be. It has builded his asylums and hospitals, and educational institutions. It has been the birthplace of all philanthropy and culture, and civilizing agency. It has been the source of light in the world's darkness. No man can, with a shadow of justice, ignore its righteous and pressing claims. It turns his criticism back upon himself, and still demands, with a deathless urgency, his allegiance and support. All worth that he has, and is, he owes to it. Thrice shame upon him for the attempted refusal of payment. Its claims must be satisfied, either here or hereafter.

With all the faults of the church, the failure of any man to recognize its temporal and eternal blessing is a greater fault. We can not claim perfection for the church, but there is far less of that element in the conscience-

stricken, excuse-making man outside of the church. The church has allowed too much condemnation to rest upon itself, and has made too little exposition of the faults in the man. The claims of Christ still rest immovable upon him. No obligation was ever placed upon the man inside of the church, which God has not also placed upon the man outside of the church. It is the Christ of the cross upon whom every man's eyes should be centered, and his pierced hand is extended to invite the cooperation of every man in the sacrificial work of the world's redemption.

Archias, the magistrate of Thebes, was sitting with many mighty men drinking wine. A messenger came in, bringing a letter informing him of a conspiracy to end his life, and warning him to flee. Archias took the letter, but instead of opening it, put it into his pocket, and said to the mes-

senger who brought it, "Business to-morrow." The next day he died; before he opened the letter the government was overturned. When he read the letter, it was too late.

O! man, let not the force of sin and the world about thy life, or the thunders of condemnation silence the voice of the Spirit and the church, which say "come." It is one of the sweetest words in the language, and, after all, still echoes through every church of Christ, "COME, COME, COME!"

III

FAULTS OF SOCIETY

ONE of the favorite paintings of critics, and one which has established itself in popular favor, is Millet's "Angelus." It is not brilliant in color or elaborate in design; on the contrary, it is marked with simplicity and is subdued in tone. A young laborer stands in a field, by his side his wife, a simple peasant girl, with blue apron and short skirt and white cap. He holds his hat in hand and bows reverently. She clasps her hands, and is the expression of devotion. They are the only figures in the picture. It is now early evening, when the glow of sunset is coloring the clouds and falling upon the earth. There is a fork in the ground; at their

side a wheel-barrow, a basket of potatoes, and everything which tells the story of a day's work. The artist has made the light to fall upon his bowed head and her folded hands. What is the meaning of this scene? Why does it seem as if the very windows of Heaven are open above it, and the interest of the angels is centered upon that ordinary field? Far away in the dim outline a church-spire rises against the sky. You can almost hear the sound of the bell. It is the evening "Angelus." At its sound the laborer pauses to worship. In the church and its spire is discovered the secret of the great artist's beautiful conception.

The sound of the church bell is the keynote of the world's music. The sight of the church spire is the key to the world's beauty. The triumphal march of human society depends upon their preservation. Whatever forces

there are in the world militating against the interests of the church ought to be recognized as most dangerous enemies, and opposed with all the courage of a true heroism. Society is to blame for some of the vacant places in our churches.

The home is vitally related to the church. They both alike, and in relation to each other, enter into the foundations of society. The whole superstructure rests upon them. If poor material or poor workmanship are permitted here, there must be weakness and crumbling and danger, and at last destruction in the building. Whatever affects the home affects the church. Home life has suffered material changes within recent years. The tendency in this age is toward the destruction of some of the essential features of home and home life. Our great centers of population are practically homeless. Families have

an existence within a few square feet of space inclosed between brick and mortar, but they do not live in homes.

The methods and necessities in modern living have rendered it impossible for a large proportion of this present generation to know anything about real home life. Not only do they live in tenements and apartments and contracted city houses, but are in a constant state of migration, and all this has much to do with the relation of the church to the people, and its abiding influence upon them. Its most powerful grip must be upon the home. There has also been a change in the religious element in home life. Most parents are guilty of neglect. The church did not occupy its proper place in the training of their children. The emphasis was always placed upon something else in the child's heart and life. School was primary, church attendance secondary.

Preparation for life was made without the chief ingredient. Ambition was nurtured and worship ignored. As the boy is, so will the man be. We are creatures of habit, and the parent is largely the maker of those habits. If the church attendance had been made as important in the boy's life as the school or the store, in all probability he would have retained his place in the church. He fails in this supreme duty when a man, because his father and mother failed in their's when he was a boy.

I have seen the famous point in Yellowstone Park, where upon the crest of the Rocky Mountains the water seems to hesitate and meditate upon which way it should go. At that "continental divide" a part of the sparkling spring turns eastward and a part flows westward. The one reaches the Atlantic, the other the Pacific. It all depends upon the deci-

sion at that critical point. The home may be the "continental divide" in a boy's life. At that point the parents' influence may turn him toward the church or toward the world. Their responsibility is tremendous at that deciding moment. In these days of rush and worldliness, religious teaching and even reading have been banished from most homes. Whatever is done for this part of the child's life has been relegated to the work of the Sunday-school, if it is given any attention whatever. The Sunday-school can never take the place of the home. The teacher can never be to the child what God intended the parent should be. Even the Sunday-school with all of its blessing for our world may not help church attendance, but hinder it, if it stands alone in the child's life. Our great progress in Sunday-school work and the unmistakable tendency to occupy the place

of the regular church service among the young, can not be forgotten. No parent who cares for the religious life of his children can afford to allow the Sunday-school to attempt the work which rightfully belongs to the home, or to usurp the place of the church itself. There is no reason why it should. It is not the fault of the Sunday-school. It is the fault of home training. We need more Sunday-schools, not less; but we need first better parents with a larger vision of their power and their responsibility. Many of the men of to-day do not attend church, because the parents of yesterday did not train them in this most sacred duty, as well as give them a delight in this highest privilege. Most of the churchless men have been Sunday-school boys, but did not regularly attend church. As soon as their trousers were lengthened, the Sunday-school was too childish for them, and

the church service was foreign to their habit of life. To call the Sunday-school the "children's church" is unjust to the Sunday-school and injurious to the child. This formation of habit in the boy's life is a most potent factor in the problem of churches without men. In addition to this carelessness and species of criminality on the part of parents there is a growing irreverence in the home — the fearless and foolish criticism of things sacred; the frivolous treatment of everything concerning the church. The Bible has not retained its sanctity; even the dust-covered book on the table had more influence than the home without any Bible at all. In some homes nominally Christian it is the custom for those who have attended church to fill the boy's ears with un-Christian criticisms of the service and the sermon. Many a man's whole future relation to the

church has been settled at the Sunday dinner table, when the church service was rehearsed and rehashed with shallow fault-finding until it was made positively indigestible. The man now is a moral and spiritual dyspeptic and in the poorest kind of religious health because of that food in his boyhood days. The home created a distaste and a dislike for the church. Every element of religion and Godliness and reverence in the home helps to fill the church. If the home loses its religion, the church will lose its men. The church is the salvation of the home, but in one sense the home is the salvation of the church.

Modern society has also hindered church attendance, through an increasing and largely unnecessary toil on the Sabbath-day. It has closed the church doors in front of hundreds of thousands of men. Much of this evil is of recent origin.

Modern invention has mingled a peril with its blessing. These advantages for a part of mankind come through injury to another part. Steam and electricity have driven the Sunday out of each week for a vast army of men. Other demands of this day are associated with these forces in the same ruinous work. Some travel and traffic and work are unquestionably necessary on the Sabbath-day; but the larger part of that which is now going on might be avoided with benefit to man and machinery alike. Without conscience or hesitation man and machinery are pushing their way through the sanctity of the seventh day. The demands are so great upon thousands of men, and many of them at one time in the church, that they are rendered unfit and unable to occupy their places in the house of God. The roar of machinery has silenced the music of the church bells. It has almost

silenced memory and conscience. Here is a man, once religious, who now goes to his work so early in the morning, and returns so late at night, that he rarely ever sees his children, except on Sunday, and he is obliged to work every Sunday afternoon, or lose his position. It is wasted time and supremest folly to tell that man that he ought to go to church on the remaining half of that day. Notwithstanding the claims of the church and Divine worship upon him, he believes that he is justified in spending his few leisure hours with his family. He is a typical illustration of thousands of men who are strangers to the church.

A Christian wife recently told me that her child never saw his father only on Sunday, and then but a small part of the day.

Our social order practically disqualifies multitudes of men for church attendance. If some workingmen had

more leisure, they undoubtedly would abuse it; but the fact still stands that many of them are more sinned against than sinning.

The present conditions have not only made Sunday a time of toil instead of rest for many, but there has also been a rapid increase of strain and pressure during the other six days, thus rendering men unfit for the service of God. This is a country and a time of rush and excitement. It is pushing and crowding which results in nerve-shattering and physical weariness and wreck. The constant effort to crowd more into less space, and more into less time, does not help, but hinders the church. This necessary absorption in daily labors does not leave room in the mind and heart for anything else. These large drafts upon every energy and thought are an educating, habit-forming factor in the man's life. There eventually

comes the condition of not having anything left of time and strength for church worship.

Paul declared, in regard to his Christianity, "This one thing I do." Most men now must honestly declare that same thing concerning their every-day work and business. Everything in their world is made to revolve around the material, and at last a church service has lost all its attraction for them. It lies in a haze, and too far away from reality. They say it is dreamy and mystical, and their desires must be met with something material and tangible. The church appears to them widely different from any other meeting, or their own business, or political or social gatherings.

Habit and the swing of the whole life over to materialism has rendered the church atmosphere disagreeable and unpleasant to many. An unloosening grip upon the plane and the

pen alike has destroyed all the "substance" of faith, and created a demand for the things which are seen. This materialistic age, with its mad rush for gold and power, has benumbed religious consciousness. Most men have concentrated their thoughts and desires and activities upon purely temporal acquisition. This is a prolific cause of the evil under discussion. This has robbed men of the time and the inclination for spiritual reflection. This strain upon mind and sensibility has either kept men away from church, or made them dissatisfied with the method of worship. There is a vital relation between this condition and the craze for amusement and entertainment.

Many churches and pulpits have forgotten their divine mission, and have sought to silence the clamor of a materialistic age by the introduction of the sensational, which was not sal-

vational. There is a sensational which is righteous and means life. Blessed be the preacher who will not be a corpse; and blessed be the church which will not be a tomb. The preacher and the church both must live with their age and up to it, if they reach men. They should be in the world, but not of it. They should meet with holy rebuke the demand for a rivalry with the theater and concert. In the new definition of the sensational, men will find that it is righteous, but that it does not cater to the material.

The forces in society which are destructive of the sanctity of the Sabbath-day are also among the forces which are keeping men away from the church. The Sunday newspaper is the most guilty of all these criminals. It ought to be tried and sentenced. No justice on earth or in heaven would leave it to continue its deadly work.

There are ten arguments against it for every shallow one in favor of it. It has usurped the place of the Bible, and even the best of the world's literature. It keeps thousands of men away from the church, who would be in their places, if it was not for this unholy occupation of sacred time. It is the guilty party also in unfitting hundreds of those who do come late to the services. This stupendous increase in size and numbers and attractions and evil influence is dealing a death-blow to every interest of the church as well as society itself. It necessitates the employment of hundreds of men and boys to prepare, print, and distribute it. It vitiates literary tastes, deadens religious feeling, destroys desire for worship, and drives worshipers from the house of God. This is a fearful indictment, but challenges a denial. Whatever small amount of good there is in it can never atone for its abom-

inable curse. It strikes the Sabbath where no other agency reaches. It thrusts itself boldly into the very face of the man who loves the day. It reaches the class of people which the saloon and every other element of its kind does not affect. It says, serpent-like, eat these, and "thou shalt not surely die." With a righteous air it declares at the head of one column, in the whole fifty pages, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," and then fills up that "religious" column with some church scandal or Biblical criticism. The men of to-day remain in their homes or hotels nearly all day with this great volume of worldliness and wickedness in their hands, and imagine that they are a little religious after all; unmindful of the great responsibilities of life and the relentless claims of the church upon every man. Oh! Sunday newspaper, thou art one of the greatest enemies of the church

of Jesus Christ. Thou shalt be held everlastingly responsible for the absence of millions from its services.

There has been an increase in clubs and social organizations, which are kept open and crowded with attractions for men on the Sabbath-day. That which was considered sin only a few years ago, is now regarded as a necessity in life's strain, and a requisite for the rest for which the day was established. The fundamental idea of worship and change and holiness and service, has been thrust into the background.

The bicycle has carried its large number of men away from the church, and fastened habits upon them which will never be broken. They have been made slaves to Sabbath desecration, by that which should have been a blessing. They have turned the blessing into a curse by making it the means of violating the first command-

ment. We need a return in society to reverence for every sacred and divinely ordained thing. Sunday is not the same as every other day. The Bible is not the same as every other book. The church is not the same as any other institution. Irreverence was never so much abroad, and the churches will never be filled so long as men breathe that poisonous air. How carelessly they talk about and handle sacred things. There is no more taking off of shoes on holy ground. The modern Sunday can not be separated from the modern church. It is the environment of the church.

"Le Grand Prix" is the name given to the great racing day in Paris, which corresponds to Derby Day in England. On that day the most celebrated horses enter the contest; an enormous sum, perhaps a million francs, is distributed in prizes. Like many public festivals in France, it

occurs on Sunday. When General Grant was in Paris, he was, of course, the object of universal attention. As a special mark of respect he was invited by the president of the republic to occupy the grand stand. Such an invitation, proceeding from the monarch or chief magistrate, is equivalent to a command, like an invitation to Windsor, or any royal residence; for a person to decline is an unheard-of thing. But General Grant, in a polite note to the president of the republic, said: "It is not in accordance with the custom of my country, or with the spirit of my religion, to spend Sunday in this way. I therefore beg that you will permit me to decline the honor which you have done me." And so, when the day came, General Grant was seen quietly sitting among the worshipers in the American Chapel.

That spirit and courage is one of the largest factors in the problem of

church attendance. Reverence for the day is the pathway to the house of God.

Our present social system allows the saloon and other kindred evils to do their deadly work in opposition to the interests of the church as well as society itself; and most always to proceed in their diabolism in violation of every law on the statute books. Kegs and demijohns and decanters and hogsheads and glasses and bottles and victims are formed into a wall in front of every church door. This is a fortification of the enemy. It stands in the way of the kingdom of God. Hundreds of thousands of men, the most generous, large-hearted, and many the best of the human family, would be worshipers in the church and servants of the most high God, and marching heavenward, if it were not for this impassable barrier. An army of 600,000 drunkards in America shakes the

earth with its staggering tread, and every one of them ought to be in the house of God. Society permits the saloon and its kindred of positive and outspoken immorality to destroy these men, and thwart the holiest efforts of the church.

Society also permits, with guilty sanction, some things which are directly contrary to the elemental principles which are taught in the church. Business transactions, which would once have received bitterest condemnation, are now passed by without notice. They are declared right simply because of demand and without regard to principle. Policy has come to be senior partner in the concern. It is so often repeated with the business man and his employees, and everybody have come to regard it as true, that "'business can not be transacted today in strict 'honesty,' "—that "'lying' is essential in order to selling."

The church has not yet incorporated this teaching into its morality. It has not made this false principle as an addendum to its Bible. And the world says: "The church is behind the age." The church is not at fault here. She can not lower the Divine standards; they are eternal, and as binding upon one age as another. The lines are not drawn distinctly enough. The Bible is explicit in its demands. It reveals the dishonest man, and the small and large gambler, whether in stocks or dice, and places the mark upon falsehood everywhere. The church, with a conscience and a Bible, and a tremendous responsibility, can not cater to the demands or methods of this day. Society has no right to say "old-fashioned" to the church. The church has the right and duty to say "condemned" to society.

This great gulf between the church and business methods is the fault of

the social world, and not the church. Her glory and her salvation are in her abiding morality and eternal purity.

This is preeminently a sociological era. The doctrine of society, the relations of men to each other, are receiving the emphasis. This has wrought injury in the separation of its efforts from those of the church, and also in ignoring the great and difficult work of the church. The socialist has demanded revolution. The church more wisely has taught regeneration. Many men have blamed the church because it has not more rapidly transformed the world, unmindful of the fact that the Christian social idea is the highest ever conceived. Its realization must necessarily be the most difficult. It is the leaven which works internally, and by a gradual process changes the whole lump of society. Men have become impatient, and en-

tered other organizations in order to help their fellow men, and to make a better society. Their principle is at fault, and the church has had to suffer the lack of their cooperation in the Divine method of social reorganization and elevation. Most marvelous results have been attained during these Christian centuries in giving women their rights and children protection, and in the disappearance of slavery and in reforms in labor, and in everything for the betterment of man and his world. It has appeared slow and impractical to many men, and they have deserted the church for some social idea, which avowedly aimed at the revolution of the whole social system.

The work of the church in its relation to society has been misunderstood and misrepresented in the modern social discussions. It saves society by first saving the individual. It preserves the divine order of love to

God first, and the resultant love for man second. It declares that the fatherhood of God must precede the brotherhood of man. These seeds of individual regeneration will at last produce the golden harvest of a perfect society. The secret of all social wrong rests in the individual heart. This might be called the century of Christian institutions, but they have to find their root in the Christian spirit and ideas and principles in the hearts of men. All other effort is the building of houses upon sand. The winds come and the storms beat, and they fall. The church can afford to stand the criticism of being slow, as long as the result is sure. This is a period of socialistic endeavor and organization and propagation of social ethics and social politics. The church in its disagreement has suffered. But time will reveal the divinity of its principles and the glory of its achieve-

ments. Men now forsaking the church will some day forsake their mistaken idea. The church is the savior of both the man and his society. These characteristics and movements and principles which are false are not fractions, but units and important elements in the grave problems which confront the church.

The church is not perfect, as we have sorrowfully discovered and courageously declared, but the whole burden of fault, as some people have supposed, does not rest upon it. Let its highest wisdom and deepest consecration be utilized in the correction of every fault and in the redemption of every man. But in all justice and in all love let the faults of the man and his society be boldly revealed and unhesitatingly condemned.

With all his faults man is still worthy of the most patient and consecrated effort for his salvation. With

all its faults society is still moving on toward its complete redemption. With all her faults the church is still the queen of earth and the bride of heaven's King.

I remember a famous morning upon one of the most beautiful and attractive and healthful islands which rest in the arms of the old Atlantic. The ocean had thrown about that small circle of land a cloak of dense fog. Every white sail was hidden; no other land could be discerned, and even the waters themselves could only be heard. It was almost like night and storm for darkness and dampness. The small steamer found its way at last to the wharf, and then crept like a blind man along its familiar course, guided by fog-bell and almost by instinct. It moved across the bay in momentary danger, and no land or river could be discovered. The trusty pilot pushed the prow of his boat relentlessly

through fog and doubt into the current of the stream, and against rushing tide. It was a morning without view, and with forced joy; but the larger hand had not moved around the dial before the tide had changed, the wind had changed, the air had changed, the whole world was transformed. The sun of that early morning had scattered darkness, and defeated fog, and uncovered the sapphire glory of heaven's canopy. Never was there such brightness and freshness and clearness. The upper world seemed to have touched the lower. The tides were coming in and filling the shore-line to the full. The breezes were laden with fragrance and joy. The marvelous and welcome change of that morning was sudden, but complete. Fogs have hidden, but never destroy the sun. The morning always breaks; the clouds always scatter; the tide comes in.

Oh! church of Christ, face the sunrise. The King is still on His golden throne, and conquers the darkness. The queen, His church, by her reflected light and power, still moves the tides of the world.

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